

8-4-1969

## Correspondence, John C. Stennis, August 4-11, 1969

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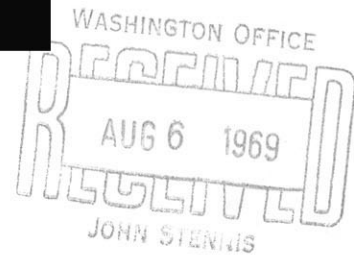
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[REDACTED]

Brookhaven, Mississippi  
August 4, 1969



Honorable John H. Stennis, Senator  
United States Congress  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Stennis:

I am very concerned about the future of our public school system if the present trend continues. The majority of the people I know are not racists, but they believe in "freedom of choice". If a person does not have the right to choose the school his child will attend then we cannot call this a free country. Many people can't afford to send their children to private schools and rather than send them under the present conditions, will refuse to send them at all.

I know you will support the bill recently passed by the House of Representatives which allows "freedom of choice". If you would like some more letters from both Negroes and Whites supporting this I would be glad to have this done.

Sincerely yours,

[REDACTED]

33 29 Schools

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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

August 11, 1969

[REDACTED]  
Assistant Principal & Counselor  
Brookhaven, Mississippi

Dear [REDACTED]:

I share your deep concern over the problems facing our schools in Mississippi. I was extremely disappointed that the recent revision in the guidelines did not go further. Frankly, in view of my repeated conferences with President Nixon, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Finch, Attorney General Mitchell and others, I had expected more of a modification.

Still we must continue to pursue every course to alleviate the present critical situation which at the present rate will destroy our public school system with a tremendous loss to both white and colored citizens. I have just recently introduced legislation and made a statement on the Senate Floor which I have enclosed. I believe passage of this legislation would go far in correcting the injustices committed against the schools of our State. If these harsh demands were made in other areas of the country, public sentiment in those areas would build up against such actions and we could get the support and help of Congressmen and Senators from those areas.

Further, I am strongly supporting and sponsoring in the Senate the section of the HEW Appropriation bill known as the "Whitten Amendments," which provide that no part of the funds contained in the appropriation may be used to force any student to [REDACTED] a particular school against the choice of his parents or to force the attendance of students at a particular school as a condition precedent to obtaining Federal funds otherwise available to any State, school district, or school.

Finally, I believe we will have to continue to try to get the Courts to adopt a more understanding attitude toward the problems of education, to apply more reasonable and workable guidelines, and to better use the discretion that is vested in them by the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

JOHN C. STENNIS, MISS., CHAIRMAN

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I will leave no stone unturned in my continued efforts to bring about a more practical approach to this problem through conferences with the President and other officials, legislation, attempts to get practical, sensible men appointed to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, and any other course available to me.

Your friend,

John Stennis  
United States Senator

JS/ht  
Enclosure